

THERE IS CLAIMED:

1    1. A method of interactive advertising, comprising:  
2       displaying a Web page having an ad space;  
3       detecting a user interaction with said ad space; and  
4       in response to said interaction, obtaining purchasing  
5       data in only said ad space.

1    2. An interactive advertising support method,  
2       comprising:  
3       providing to a web client an interactive element  
4       obtained from an element server;  
5       providing at said element server a companion element  
6       corresponding to said interactive element;  
7       responding to a distant target file requirement of said  
8       interactive element by sending to said companion  
9       element a distant file request relating to a distant  
10      target file address on a distant server distinct from  
11      said element server;  
12      responding, at said companion element, to said distant  
13      file request, by interacting with said distant server  
14      in accordance with said distant file request.

1    3. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 2 wherein, when said distant file request  
3       is a distant target file delivery request:  
4       said distant target file address indicates a distant  
5       target file of said distant server; and  
6       said companion element:

7       responds to said distant target file delivery  
8       request by obtaining said distant target file  
9       from said distant server,  
10      stores said distant target file at said element  
11      server as a local target file, and  
12      provides said local target file to said interactive  
13      element in satisfaction of said distant target  
14      file delivery request.

1    4. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 2 wherein, when said distant file request  
3    is a distant target file transmit request:

4    said distant target file address indicates a distant  
5    target file destination address of said distant  
6    server;  
7    said interactive element provides said distant target  
8    file to said companion element; and  
9    said companion element responds to said distant target  
10    file transmit request by sending said distant target  
11    file to said distant target file destination address.

1    5. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 2, further comprising:

3    said web client being provided with a primary target  
4    file from a website system;  
5    said web client displaying for a user an original web  
6    page based on said primary target file;  
7    said primary target file including a reference to an ad  
8    space file of a distributor system;  
9    said ad space file including a reference to said  
10    interactive element;

11       said interactive element defining an advertising program  
12           of an ad space of said primary target file; and  
13        said distant file server defining a vendor system of a  
14           vendor.

1       6.   The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 5, wherein:

3        said advertising program places information about  
4           products of said vendor directly in said ad space;  
5           and

6        said advertising program displays a user activatable  
7           area for browsing said products through said ad space  
8           without leaving said original web page.

1       7.   The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 6, wherein said advertising program  
3       displays a user activatable area for enabling said user  
4       to purchase a selected one of said products of said  
5       vendor without leaving said original web page display.

1       8.   The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 7, wherein said advertising program  
3       includes a shopping cart capability allowing said user to  
4       select a plurality of said products and then purchase  
5       them all at one time without leaving said original web  
6       page.

1       9.   The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 5, wherein:

3       said advertising program initially displays in said ad  
4       space a first presentation selected from the set  
5       consisting of images, animations, and text;  
6       said advertising program responds to a first interaction  
7       of said user with said ad space by displaying a  
8       second presentation.

1       10. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 5, wherein an initial program load for  
3       said advertising program is performed so as to load a  
4       highest priority resource prior to loading, in a low  
5       priority thread, a remainder of resources required by  
6       said advertising program.

1       11. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 5, further comprising making a detection  
3       of an environment of said web client prior to said step  
4       of providing to said web client said interactive element.

1       12. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 11, wherein said detection of said  
3       environment includes determining one or more of:  
4       the kind of software for said web client;  
5       the kind of hardware on which said web client is  
6       running; and  
7       the connection speed between the element server and the  
8       web client.

1       13. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2       forth in claim 11, further comprising selecting said

3    interactive element based on said determination of said  
4    environment.

1    14. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 5, further comprising:  
3       making a determination of a context of said original web  
4       page based on said primary target file; and  
5       selecting content for said interactive element based on  
6       said determination of said context of said original  
7       web page.

1    15. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 5, wherein said advertising program  
3    provides a presentation emulating a website of said  
4    vendor.

1    16. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 5, wherein said interactive element sends  
3    to said companion element a distant file request for a  
4    multimedia file, and provides the contents of said  
5    multimedia file through said ad space.

1    17. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 5, further comprising a step of said  
3    vendor updating said distant target file.

1    18. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2    forth in claim 17, wherein said updating is performed  
3    automatically from said vendor system at a predetermined  
4    interval.

1   19. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said distant target file is an  
3   electronic product of said vendor and is delivered to  
4   said user via said companion element and said interactive  
5   element.

1   20. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 19, wherein said electronic product of  
3   said vendor is one or more of:  
4     a software product,  
5     a written product, and  
6     a multimedia product.

1   21. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said advertising program  
3   constitutes a registration engine for gathering user  
4   subscriptions.

1   22. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein content for display by said  
3   interactive element is selected based on information  
4   about said user.

1   23. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 22, wherein said information about said  
3   user is obtained from a cookie.

1   24. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 22, wherein said information about said  
3   user is obtained from an ad tracking database.

1   25. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 24, wherein said ad tracking database is  
3   provided by said distributor system.

1   26. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 24, wherein said ad tracking database is  
3   provided by said vendor system.

1   27. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising providing to said  
3   user a price quote for a customized one of said products.

1   28. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising selecting content  
3   for said interactive element to display based on  
4   geographical information pertaining to said user.

1   29. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said interactive element is  
3   provided with information that is continually updated.

1   30. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 29, further comprising said interactive  
3   element providing a transaction capability for creating a

4 transaction based on a present value of said information  
5 that is continually updated.

1 31. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2 forth in claim 30, wherein said interactive element  
3 includes a user activatable area for setting an alert  
4 based on a present value of said information that is  
5 continually updated.

1 32. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2 forth in claim 31, further comprising triggering said  
3 alert to create said transaction.

1 33. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2 forth in claim 32, wherein said interactive element is  
3 structured to present to said user a live gaming  
4 interface.

1 34. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2 forth in claim 5, wherein user interactions with said  
3 interactive element are used as an input to an ad  
4 tracking database storing information relating to said  
5 user.

1 35. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2 forth in claim 34, wherein said ad tracking database  
3 stores includes shipping and purchasing information  
4 pertaining to said user, and said shipping and purchasing  
5 information is accessible by interactive elements  
6 pertaining to products from a plurality of vendors.

1   36. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said ad space includes a user  
3   activatable area for a user to initiate an operation for  
4   activating said interactive element in an independent  
5   window.

1   37. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said original web page includes  
3   a plurality of ad spaces with corresponding interactive  
4   elements.

1   38. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 37, wherein said corresponding interactive  
3   elements for said plurality of ad spaces are selected by  
4   said user.

1   39. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said advertising program  
3   displays a survey for gathering feedback from said user  
4   and stores a user response to said survey in an ad  
5   tracking database without leaving said original web page.

1   40. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising storing information  
3   obtained about said user through said interactive element  
4   in an ad tracking database, and sending advertising  
5   information to said user via one or more of email,  
6   telephone calls, faxes, and mail.

1   41. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising:

3       storing information obtained about said user through  
4        said interactive element in an ad tracking database,  
5        said information including environment information  
6        relating to said user,

7       wherein said environment information includes one or  
8       more of:

9           connection bandwidth,  
10          hardware address,  
11          hardware platform,  
12          software environment,  
13          operating system,  
14          cookie data,  
15          data acquired from previous interactions,  
16          recent browsing history,  
17          referring website,  
18          current website context,  
19          purchasing history,  
20          address,  
21          age,  
22          country,  
23          language,  
24          sex, and  
25          survey data.

1   42. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising a step of performing  
3   post presentation marketing by presenting to said user  
4   one or more of coupons, discounts, and incentives.

1   43. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, further comprising a step for sending  
3   to said vendor statistics relating to one or more of an  
4   environment of said user, behavior of said user, user  
5   interactions, and the duration of said user interactions.

1   44. The interactive advertising support method as set  
2   forth in claim 5, wherein said interactive element  
3   provides a user communication interface for interactive  
4   communication between said vendor and said user through  
5   said ad space.

1   45. The interactive advertising method as set forth in  
2   claim 5, wherein said interactive element includes a  
3   natural language capable query program.

1   46. The interactive advertising method as set forth in  
2   claim 5, wherein said interactive element includes a  
3   conversation capable agent for communicating with said  
4   user.

1   47. The interactive advertising method as set forth in  
2   claim 5, wherein said interactive element includes a  
3   communication interface supporting a chat session.

1   48. An element server for supporting advertising,  
2   comprising:  
3     a processor, and  
4     a memory under control of said processor;

5 wherein said memory includes computer readable  
6 instructions for causing said processor to perform  
7 predetermined steps, comprising:  
8 providing to a web client an interactive element;  
9 providing a companion element corresponding to said  
10 interactive element;  
11 receiving a distant file request relating to a  
12 distant target file address on a distant server  
13 distinct from said element server;  
14 responding to said distant file request by  
15 interacting with said distant server, through  
16 said companion element, in accordance with said  
17 distant file request.

1 49. The element server as set forth in claim 48, wherein  
2 said predetermined steps further comprise:  
3 when said distant file request is a distant target file  
4 delivery request, identifying said distant target  
5 file address as an indicator of a distant target file  
6 of said distant server; and  
7 responding to said distant target file delivery request  
8 by:  
9 obtaining said distant target file from said distant  
10 server,  
11 storing said distant target file as a local target  
12 file, and  
13 providing said local target file in satisfaction of  
14 said distant target file delivery request.

1 50. The element server as set forth in claim 48, wherein  
2 said predetermined steps further comprise:

3       when said distant file request is a distant target file  
4           transmit request, identifying said distant target  
5           file address as an indicator of a distant target file  
6           destination address of said distant server;  
7       receiving said distant target file; and  
8       responding to said distant target file transmit request  
9           by sending said distant target file to said distant  
10          target file destination address.

1       51. A computer program product for implementing a method  
2       of interactive advertising, comprising:  
3           a computer readable medium, and  
4           computer readable instructions on said computer readable  
5           medium;  
6       said computer readable instructions being adapted to  
7           enable a computer to perform predetermined steps,  
8           comprising:  
9              providing to a web client an interactive element;  
10             providing a companion element corresponding to said  
11              interactive element;  
12             receiving a distant file request relating to a  
13              distant target file address on a distant server;  
14             responding to said distant file request by  
15              interacting with said distant server, through  
16              said companion element, in accordance with said  
17              distant file request.

1       52. The computer program product as set forth in claim  
2       51, wherein said predetermined steps further comprise:  
3       when said distant file request is a distant target file  
4           delivery request, identifying said distant target

5       file address as an indicator of a distant target file  
6       of said distant server; and  
7       responding to said distant target file delivery request  
8       by:  
9           obtaining said distant target file from said distant  
10      server,  
11      storing said distant target file as a local target  
12      file, and  
13      providing said local target file in satisfaction of  
14      said distant target file delivery request.

1     53. The computer program product as set forth in claim  
2     51, wherein said predetermined steps further comprise:  
3       when said distant file request is a distant target file  
4       transmit request, identifying said distant target  
5       file address as an indicator of a distant target file  
6       destination address of said distant server;  
7       receiving said distant target file; and  
8       responding to said distant target file transmit request  
9       by sending said distant target file to said distant  
10      target file destination address.

1     54. A context sensitive advertising method, comprising:  
2       preparing a primary target file comprising a relation  
3       between context sensitive display elements and  
4       corresponding keys;  
5       detecting a user interaction with one of said context  
6       sensitive display elements;  
7       in response to said detecting of said user interaction,  
8       displaying an ad space based on the corresponding key

9       of said one of said context sensitive display  
10      elements.

1     55. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2     forth in claim 54, wherein:

3        said primary target file includes a reference to an ad  
4        program, and said ad program is a function definition  
5        file including functions for displaying said ad  
6        space.

1     56. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2     forth in claim 54, wherein said ad space is a popup  
3     window.

1     57. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2     forth in claim 56, wherein said popup window  
3     automatically closes after the lapse of a predetermined  
4     period of time in the absence of a user interaction with  
5     said popup window.

1     58. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2     forth in claim 57, wherein said popup window remains open  
3     beyond said lapse of said predetermined period of time  
4     in response to a user interaction with said popup  
5     window.

1     59. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2     forth in claim 56, wherein said displaying of said ad  
3     space is made further in response to said user

4 interaction being detected for a time greater than a  
5 threshold period of time.

1 60. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2 forth in claim 54, wherein said ad space is other than a  
3 popup window.

1 61. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2 forth in claim 60, wherein said displaying of said ad  
3 space is made further in response to said user  
4 interaction being detected for a time greater than a  
5 threshold period of time.

1 62. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2 forth in claim 55, wherein said step of displaying said  
3 ad space comprises:

4 loading an ad space target file having selection  
5 statements;  
6 executing said selection statements so as to select,  
7 based on said the corresponding key of said one of  
8 said context sensitive display elements, an ad space  
9 display management file; and  
10 performing said displaying of said ad space based under  
11 control of the contents of said selected ad space  
12 display management file.

1 63. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2 forth in claim 62, wherein said contents of said ad space  
3 display management file indicate an image file for  
4 display in said ad space.

1   64. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2   forth in claim 62, wherein contents of said ad space  
3   display management file indicate an interactive element  
4   for controlling display of said ad space.

1   65. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2   forth in claim 62, further comprising:  
3    predefining a collection of said keys, associated  
4      products for sale, and corresponding ad space display  
5      management files for one specific customer;  
6    using ones of said keys and associated context sensitive  
7      display elements in a plurality of primary target  
8      files defining a set of premium affiliate webpages;  
9      and  
10     providing compensation for said premium affiliate  
11       webpages from said one specific sponsor.

1   66. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2   forth in claim 62, further comprising:  
3    predefining a collection of said keys, associated  
4      products for sale, and corresponding ad space display  
5      management files, for a plurality of customers;  
6    using ones of said keys and associated context sensitive  
7      display elements in a plurality of primary target  
8      files defining an advertising network of webpages;  
9    providing subscriptions for said keys to ones of said  
10     plurality of customers;  
11    determining, when said user interaction with one of said  
12     context sensitive display elements is detected, which

13       one of said plurality of customers has subscribed to  
14       the corresponding one of said keys;  
15       performing said displaying of said ad space based on  
16       said corresponding one of said keys and also based on  
17       said determination of said subscribed one of said  
18       plurality of customers.

1       67. The context sensitive advertising method as set  
2       forth in claim 62, further comprising:  
3       predefining a collection of said keys, associated  
4       products for sale, and corresponding ad space display  
5       management files;  
6       using ones of said keys and associated context sensitive  
7       display elements in a plurality of primary target  
8       files defining an advertising network of webpages;  
9       providing subscriptions for said keys to ones of said  
10      plurality of customers;  
11      determining, when said user interaction with one of said  
12      context sensitive display elements is detected, which  
13      one of said plurality of customers has subscribed to  
14      the corresponding one of said keys;  
15      performing said displaying of said ad space based on  
16      said corresponding one of said keys and also based on  
17      said determination of said subscribed one of said  
18      plurality of customers.

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